

COLLEGE CHANGES EVERYTHING

Iowa College Aid's Collective Impact Initiative:

A stronger economy, skilled workforce & actively engaged community through educational attainment

Many of us know the statistics and have seen firsthand how earning a college degree yields considerable returns in the form of higher earnings and more career opportunities for the individual. But often we overlook how increasing college access for our citizens can also strengthen the economies of the communities we call home.

Collective Impact is a collaborative approach that engages key stakeholders from across different sectors in our communities toward a common goal—in this case, increasing a city or metro area's college attainment rate to 60% by 2025.¹ The benefits associated with a college education can be realized through: postsecondary training, education that supports gainful employment, non-degree credential programs, four-year degrees and beyond.

Why it Matters: A Stronger Workforce

An educated workforce is vital for the continued economic prosperity of Iowa communities. Employers in all industries have an increasing need for skilled and educated workers. Only 41 percent of Iowa's 1.6 million working-age adults (25-64 years old) have two or four-year degrees², while more than six in 10 jobs in the state will require postsecondary credentials by 2018.³ Iowa's economic future depends on us producing more college graduates—a task more effectively tackled at the local level in our communities rather than by the state as a whole.

The Payoff: A Stronger Economy

Increasing college attainment leads to stronger local and state economies. Iowa's economic future depends on us producing more college graduates. An increase of one-percent in degree attainment leads to a two-percent increase in a community's economic growth.⁴ In addition to the benefits of increased income and employability for individuals, college educated adults are also civic-minded and actively engaged in their communities and are less likely to rely on social services. Higher family incomes also benefit state and local economies through increased tax revenue.⁵

How it Works

College Changes Everything™ is based on the premise that sustained change is only possible through cross-sector coordination. Relationships based on shared responsibility and trust, development of a common agenda, shared measurement of goals, effective communication and mutual reinforcement of activities among all participants are key to successfully increase college attainment at the community level.

Building upon the existing initiatives and resources currently available in our communities, College Changes Everything™ leverages the strengths and long-term plans of each participating organization. Ground-level legwork of VISTA volunteers, access to data and training and strategic assistance for community leaders provided by Iowa College Aid and other state and national experts fuel the movement to meet the community's higher education goals and raise educational attainment statewide.

¹ Lumina Foundation Goal 2025

² U.S. Census Bureau, 2011 American Community Survey

³ Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce (2010). Projections of jobs and education requirements through 2018.

⁴ Able, J.R., & Gabe, T.M. (2010). Human capital and economic activity in urban America (Federal Reserve Bank of New York Staff Report no. 332). Retrieved February 2, 2014 from http://www.newyorkfed.org/research/staff_reports/sr332.html.

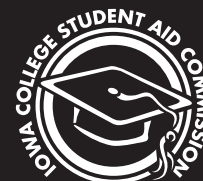
⁵ CollegeBoard (2013). Education pays: the benefits of higher education for individuals and society.

Who to Invite to the Table?

Community Colleges
Area Private Colleges
PK-12 School Districts
Chamber of Commerce
Community Action Agencies
Community Foundations
County or City Elected Officials
County or City Staff
Economic Development Agencies
Ethnic Communities
Faith Communities
Major Employers
Nonprofits
Public Libraries
Service Organizations
United Way
Workforce Investment Act (WIA)

For more information, contact:

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Because College Changes Everything...